

CLOSE UP

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AS IS

BY THE EDITOR

If people would only stop trying to quench me by calling to my attention that Shakespeare must always be greater than any film, that Praxitiles this, that Leonardo da Vinci that, that Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata or Milton's Paradise Lost leave no room for anything that isn't some vague echo of themselves. There are two more complaints, one of which I have already somewhat jubilantly made, but am forced to make again ; namely that because film art is new it stands a much better chance of being good, and that the superstition that an art only develops through time has no foundation in fact. Such talk as I have heard about art since starting CLOSE UP would have made one less devoted than myself abandon it forever, — platitudes so dreary, so incompetent, so maudlin, that, realising they were more or less sincerely meant, one ceased to wonder why Man (spelt with the capital) should turn up his nose at it.

First of all it seemed to me art was made a kind of figure or image, almost personalitised. Art meant something, some static symbol or regime whose travelling salesmen were flung at me with bated breath ; Shakespeare, Shelley, Scriabin, Henry Irving, Herbert Tree, Euripides. A touzled throng ! One was solemnly requested to note the thing they stood for, and to abandon forever on the spot the thing that one, one-self is trying to stand for. "Such trash, my dear sir, such trash."

But. I mean.ART ! Isn't it getting to be rather an awful sort of word, or isn't it ? Certainly it sends shivers down my back at this minute, seeing it as apparently it is seen, in spite of the fact that I am supposed to be upholding it and printing the beastly word on my cover, and at least twenty times on as many pages. Let me try to refrain from asking *What Is Art*. I'm not all that pompous, but let me just say what to my mind it most emphatically isn't. Art isn't that ghoulis, witless sort of plaster-of-paris morgue where you go to identify the dead. To blazes with the past. If art isn't a corpse, and artists here to lay it out and put pennies on its eyelids, then it is alive and belongs to now and the future.

My second complaint is please deliver me from hearing ever any more the phrase *vile Americanisms*. Otherwise I shall be forced to retaliate vile Europeanisms. America is not vile, its language is not vile, and nothing about it is vile. If cornered with the questions what is art then, what is America then ? I would answer, art is America, America is art,

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and although I do not deny that there is much in it that is terrible, much that is raw, no person with independant judgment could fail to see its greatness.

I do trust that my zeal will not be taken amiss, but naturally I want to point out that my own mind is capable of judgment, and that I would not have formed an interest in films, nor undertaken to edit this journal without believing in myself and my work, and having formed my attitude to Botticelli and Byron.

The fact that seems to project itself out of all the criticism is that the critics do not seem to be aware of what really has been done or is about to be done in the world of films. They quote long lists of films which, with them, I agree are not worth a moment's consideration. The tendency is a kind of chronic unresilience, an inability to see beyond what they have already seen, not to see what conceivably may be seen in the near future.

When I say all that I do say for and on behalf of the movie I do not mean that Wild West dramas, or the usual kind of Bedlam which usually represents domestic life among the usual cultured, are anything more than what they so obviously are, —crude and trumpery stuff the use of which is slowly passing. What one means is something totally unrelated to all this, the infinite possibility in the moving picture camera for creating and making tangible the most subtle thoughts, impressions, apprehensions. Its acute sensitivity practically demands that it is operated by an acutely sensitive creative brain. Inferior brains behind a photoplay are their own con-

fession, are shown up ; —pose, artificiality, mannerism, are destroyed without mercy. And when people like Pabst and Czinner have turned out films like *Joyless Street* and *Nju* and in America William K. Howard has gladdened us with his very promising *White Gold*, then soon people will look at nothing that is less good, they will be impatient of falsity. "If this *can* be done then we are not to be expected to look at bad films ever again." It *can* be done, it will have to be done, and believe me, it will not only be done but surpassed. Good films are no more than ten years old, the best are all of recent date, but it is necessary to refer back since only by pointing out what has already been done rightly can it be explained what "rightly" stands for. A film as good or better than let us say *Joyless Street* is needed ; what then can we quote except *Joyless Street* ? I can see no necessity to drag in Shakespeare. When you are discussing architecture you do not usually argue that your building will not be good because some chef has cooked a perfect mutton cutlet. When we discuss films let us discuss films, when we discuss Elizabethan drama, then don't let us forget Shakespeare.

* * *

Now having brindled long enough for the moment, I am going to peep at an average programme of one of the ordinary, larger cinema theatres. Corner sites are popular, so it is on a corner we stop, attracted by an air of opulence with gilt and fern and marble, and a splendid, royal blue pair of very

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laconic gentlemen saying up the stairs to the box office, to your right sir, stalls this way. Stooping before a gilt cage you are able to peep through and say into a pile of blond curls, "Have you seats at three and sixpence?" A robot voice snaps "Five and nine and eight and six only," if you are late or unlucky, otherwise without more ado, your ticket spits like a white tongue from a brass mouth, and your change is clapped before you. (Point for *Comment and Review*: Something should be done. It's the devil's own job trying to pick up your money from that brass ledge, and wastes quite enough time in the course of ten minutes to form a queue of thirty people, who, if promptly dealt with would not have to wait at all.)

More royal blue uniforms close round you, usually one burly one and several diminutive ones that pipe "Take the lift up sir?" or "Programme sir?" Then presently you are delivered over to more blond curls and stumble into dark. Here small lamps guide you to your fauteuil, and lo! somebody is rescuing somebody, or somebody is running away, and here is an American comedy, you know from long experience. Picking up the thread of the story without any appreciable difficulty, you do not have to give it your mind. Sometimes there is a genuine cleverness in them, sometimes they are incredibly bad, but it doesn't greatly matter whether this particular one is good or bad, you have already noted that American comedies are better than French comedies, and infinitely better than German ones. American comedies, you have already decided, are America's strength in film production; you can always look at American comedies and sometimes

enjoy them, although American sentiment and American sob-stuff to the European mind is nearly always, in its films, a damp and treacly rehash of 1880-ish yellow-back novelish eyewash. Mind you, I do not say that this is not alright for America, for in this amazing land there is an essential *naiveté* of feeling, and as ballast for efficient mechanisation, a weight of sentimentality that to the less ebullient and more rooted European has the consistency of uncooked dough. It is a *jeunesse*, a something adolescent; you will find it in all Americans, no matter how brilliant, how rare; a sixteen-year-oldishness or final unsophistication, wherein is its strength and its weakness. Somewhat *blasé*, elaborate expressions of European consciousness, (in films mostly from Germany), are rarely comprehended there. There is no reason why they should be. America's sentimentality is right in America, though we in Western Europe need a richer fare. On the other hand, America's youth gives it the exuberance of youth, its comedies (I mean its comedies not its "comics") have so often an irresistible boisterousness that we in Europe cannot achieve any more; we are too middle-aged, we would not be able to forget ourselves, we would look such idiots.

We think this all out quite leisurely while looking at what is turning out to be quite a dreary little comedy, and yet we know that if we see nothing else but dreary comedies for many months we will not alter our opinion. For, in spite of itself, America has the charm and graciousness of youth, the satire and the unselfconsciousness of youth, that is part of its innate selfconsciousness and courage.

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Through all this the organ pipes and somebody takes the empty seat beside you. Then curtains glide together, and the suave concealed lights expand a little like taking a breath, then expire. The curtains roll away, and you are looking at the news reel. To the tune of a march you see a military event. Somebody puts a wreath on something. Somebody wins a motor race. Somebody dies. Slow music. Somebody goes away, somebody comes back. An aeroplane goes up. So it goes on. Then a film of interest is shown, odds and ends and scraps of everything. An industry, a country (sometimes in colour) physical training, a bit of travel, ladies' fashions ending up with an episode from the life of Felix the Cat, or its pen-and-ink equivalent.

Have you noted your audience during these presentations ? Isn't there just a little the feeling of *entr'acte* ? Isn't there a feeling of shuffling, of getting ready, something that suggests they are shaking themselves up for the "Big Film" ?

They have not long to wait, for soon now the curtains again meet, and this time the concealed lights "fade-in" and reveal the tall architecture of the theatre. A stately and elegant place ! Another readjustment of lights and with the first notes of the music you realise the orchestra has arrived. It too, has stately and elegant proportions, it announces largely and with sonorous wind instruments, DRAMA !

So you, yourself, find you, yourself, sitting up too, getting ready too. It is an exciting moment, and far too often spoilt by vaudeville acts, singers, or the orchestra itself, got somehow in a wrong place, not under the stage but *on* it. You

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wonder why ? Is it in the least necessary ? Is it artistic, is it entertaining ? Do people really want to listen to the Ride of the Valkyries ? Apparently, for they clap for more, and get it. They get Flat Tyred Papa, Mama's Going To Give You Air, or When You Played The Organ And I Sang The Rosary, vaguely (do you hear it ?) evoking soft singing from the people around you. We scratch our heads and admit it is probably alright ; we even like poor Flat Tyred Papa, but we do feel there was no need to perch that group of handsome men up there where they don't belong, and make them an excuse for lighting effects like a spectrum gone to seed. It would be much better to have left them downstairs.

But sometimes those girls come on in a row, always under-rehearsed, always so dismally out of place, such a negation of everything there, and so utterly negated by it all. Please let us have no more of them than we have already. Really we don't want them. We started going to movies only because we were bored to death with girls with legs in a row.

And the biggest, blackest sin, that mortal injury, the *Prologue*. Have you seen them ? I mean singers dressed up and meant to create an atmosphere for the film before it begins. That, America, is to your eternal shame ! How anybody can have imagined that glee singers in boleros, turbans, or Foreign Legion great-coats were going to create anything but fancy-dress glee singing I cannot imagine ! The awful thing is its crudity, the showing up of the crudity of stage-craft. You get the sudden contrast, and it is overwhelming. Oil and vinegar do *not* mix.

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To be quite fair, movies in a playhouse seem all wrong too, each has its own authentic atmosphere, and they are utterly foreign to each other. The movies have it on their side, because their atmosphere is more consistent, their theatres more handsome and better ventilated. But a movie in a playhouse looks almost as dismal as a musical comedy in a movie theatre.

Well, sometimes you are lucky, and the Big Film comes unannounced. Is the Vaudeville missed, the Prologue missed, the Musical Interlude missed? Never. People are not even aware that they might have been included, and never think what might have been thrust upon them. No, they will not take it seriously in a film theatre. Any vaudeville is a signal for relax, for attention to wander, for friends to begin to talk, for cigarettes to be lighted, for pipes to be tapped on the side of the fauteuil.

What then is the Big Film? What is a Big Film?

There is a range of Big Films wider than any editorial can compass, starting at incredibly bad, and going in semitones to incredibly good. It usually happens that when you stumble in haphazardly, you stumble in on bad to incredibly bad ones. Eighty to ninety per cent of any average Big Films are completely dull, second-rate, and trivial. You are desired to sympathise with persons on whom you would not waste a moment's consideration, you are asked to identify yourself with a pack of idiots whose worthlessness whether of virtue or of vice is only less senile than their inability to cope with perfectly simple problems of any kind with dignity or decency or tact.

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Small wonder that the casual visitor is chilled ! But is he ? Usually not at all. If he were, cinema theatres would not go on being built with such competition frenzy of lavishness, they would always be half empty, they would not even pay their way. The only conclusion is that people *like* bad films. That people *like* to identify themselves with ill mannered heroines and overbearing heroes, with neglected mothers and a generally uncomfortable atmosphere of ill-bred pathos. As a matter of fact I don't believe they do. It is something in their attitude, and to analyse it is both interesting and depressing. It goes back to what I have already in a previous article referred to, a greater interest in the personal appearance of the star than the play that star appears in. It is not "There is a film on at the Palace supposed to be a revelation in film art" but "I *do* like Adolphe Menjou, he's on at the Pavilion. Let's go."

The identification is not with the characters as portrayed, but with the stars themselves. As a matter of fact because of the convention of virtue and vice, chastity and corruption, etc. etc. it doesn't matter what sort of bumptious loafer your hero is, or what sort of insufferable muggins your heroine ; the mere fact that they are hero and heroine is enough. It is taken for granted that one's sympathy is with them. Another thing that happens is that when the film is not good enough to keep the brain working, the public sinks into a kind of hypnotic daze. The screen, with its changing forms becomes something in the nature of a crystal, and the public in the nature of a crystal gazer. Mind in some way neatly obliterates itself. The

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music, the suave dusk and an amatory continuity with ardent close-ups is enough to work the charm, the public is under its spell, half drugged, entirely at rest. No wonder the film is popular. Even at its worst it is a sort of hashish !

All the same why does the casual visitor write me disparaging letters ? Because he has taken his mind to his local cinema. A great mistake. Leave your mind at home. Make that a rule. If needed it will be there, but if you take it with you you will find it cumbersome paraphernalia. You have taken your mind to honestly grapple with something that is not in the scope of mind at all, and you are misled into thinking that I have no right to say that films are the art of the future. When I say that I do *not* mean that Adolphe Menjou is the art of the future, talented as he may be, nor Norma Talmadge, nor Liane Haid. I mean that *films*, not people are the art of the future, or if you will have it, a combine of the arts of the future. You cannot dispute if you have only seen its worst or mediocre presentations. See *Kopf Hoch Charley*, see *The student Of Prague*, see *Potemkin*, *Out Of The Mist*, *Chang*, *Prince Achmed*, and then begin to judge ! To each of these you may return "Yes, *but...*", "Yes, *but...*", and I will say, "Yes, *but...* take them as a whole. Think of what all these films, considered as different specimens of one medium, amount to in the aggregate ! Shuffle them up, make one force of them, and isn't it a mighty force ?" Think what you have. First of all pure form, every single attribute of photographic art, miracles to work in tones and tone depths, light, geometry, design, sculpture. . . . pure abstraction all of it. Then

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this not static but with all the resources of movement, change, rhythm, space, completely fluid to the will of the artist. Then miracles to work again with trick photography, infinite possibilities of suggestion, contrast, merging, dissociation ; whole realms of fantasy, states of mind, of emotion, psychic things, to symbolise not in the limit of one special moment of time, but in all the ebb and flow of their course, their beginning and their end. Not only have you mastery over the outward manifestation, but over the inner and inmost working too. The range is almost without limit. You can be completely direct or completely rarified, if I may use the word. What more can anybody ask ?

But the Big Film comes to its end, and we are still sitting here. We don't want to move. It has been a good show or it has been a bad show, it doesn't greatly matter. We feel that we will sit on and see the comedy round again to the point where we came in.

The greatest joy is when all unsuspecting we wander into something we did not expect, some dazzling, brilliant film that somehow we had thought was going to be so bad. This happens more and more often, and in Switzerland we have this advantage. We see films as soon as they are released. Heavy advance booking is not made. And we read six months after we have seen them of films just reaching London and New York. They come from Germany, France, Italy, Sweden, Russia, America, and somewhat tardily from England, from everywhere, uncensored, think of that ! and all the better for it. There they have a *programme de famille* sometimes, and

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to these only are children admitted. To all who would argue against this policy I recommend a visit to Switzerland. No more successful arrangement could possibly be made than this concession or recognition of the fact that people of Switzerland and people in Switzerland live decently from choice, and not because a censor guards their precarious morals.

KENNETH MACPHERSON.

THREE SITTING HERE

(CONTINUED FROM THE SEPTEMBER CLOSE UP)

It is marble on top.

It is a rose marble on top.

There is no difference at all in the way that in every way and every day there are all certain that there is no reason why they should not be delighted by me in every way.

Leave it to me in every way.

How do they know that they admire me how do they love to be attentive to the next to nearly plainly left to right when is it that they ask was it done at once. How do they relinquish their better than most with them left to it coming change-fully asked. They are relieved to know that they love me to be widely admired and reasonably furnished with evidences of their attachment. Very nearly half of it in time.

Why is there every reason that they should admire me. We there is every reason why they should admire me. We there is every reason why they should admire me. It is not very likely that in the same it would be with the same desire to admire me that very well pleased me that they admired me with every reason for admiring me. It is not true that there is a middle with the end.

Why do they do do they know that they do love me so.

We know and they know they know they do do love me so. What reason is there for their attachment to me. Every reason there is every reason for their being and having this attachment for me.

If they are as increasing in their emotion of admiration as they seem to be and they are with the exception of those who for this reason and there is a very distinct reason have been lessening in their emotion of attraction toward me and when they are as they are continuously and rapidly having it as an accretion the attraction that I am developing in the direction of their desiring to be admiring me and with very good reason. They are accumulating and it is increasing and there is every reason why it should be in addition the emotion of admiration which is rapidly and contentedly accumulating of being in my continuing to increasingly be the object of their admiration. Might I know why. Yes certainly I might and I do know why they are adding to their admiration as there is excellent reason for every addition that is being evidenced of their increasing admiration of me.

If they do choose to do what is it about which they make

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an ado. About how I do it in order to be admittedly left alone and not lonely. It is very lovely.

They were bent upon delighting me accidentally and in the meantime it was as much as I could do to be more than satisfied.

With this as their wish it is not exceptional that they are in place of letting it be almost as well as if they had been interrupted by it alone. Letting it be said first before the interruption came. It is not only undoubtedly but a certainty that they will do as they say admire me.

In no place is there more room than there is with them to adding to an admiration which when made a way for me.

It is like it and with it a little all told that they care in very likely which is meant to be nearly left at most as theirs alike. They do admire me meaning to me and to mine.

Like it for them and bows of their kind of ribbon to tie high higher than hair and their their mingle mingle with and bestow their individual responsibility for their edge with in this and their and abound. Their bounds.

They do leaving it to be a chance which can be seized and meant as if with it as no hindrance let it be as a target with their enjoyment and mine. It is mine to be left not alone with him here but there. I am admired by the time this and with this and with this this with this.

In which way can he be likened to me when this you see remember me. He likes me.

Every one singly and together admire me. They have seen

it become which is why when and surrounded by amending what has been added and reasoning reasoning is there and left alone with their very carefully withdrawn complimenting in assistance. It is by this time that they are and mine. There is every reason for the greeting with which they do not deny that they do not need to try to believe that it is a necessity desirably to unitedly admire me. In reality to excitedly admire me. They do admire me. In their admiring of me there is connectedly a reunion of their celebrating their admiration for me and of me.

What is it that they are saying as they are admiring me they are saying everything consecutively everything in their admiration. There is practically everything in their admiration everything and there is practically everything in their admiration their admiration in addition.

Why weddings close close to it. It is particularly agreeable to be surrounded by best of all admiring everything equally and in proportion and with sincerity and in admiration.

It is best of all to be additionally insomuch as there is individual addition that there should be additional interest in adding admiration not reluctantly but invariably. By this means there is stubbornness in anticipation and repeatedly repeatedly they might be pressed and expressed all that which is implied by their attitude of admiration which is undoubtedly as if when in reliance they are establishing it. It is mostly in the form of extra and attracting their admiration by unison and additionally representing those who have been not only realising but more than realising gaining that admiration as in this

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as a circumstance. It is very kindly left to them to bestow upon it their admiration and they additionally do not limit this to their intention not at all within that. At last and inland and by nearly with them at all likening it to their arrangement of theirs as a festoon which makes deliberation instantly an advantage which presumably relating to this makes it do. At once and by the time that they are shared. An increasing admiration is bestowed upon me.

When this you see remember literally everything about how very much they have been able to repeat their intentional admiration of the regularity of their devoting themselves to the arrangement of their decoration of the delight produced by me. In the meantime. They might be clarified by a determination to inculcate their regularly induced pleasure by insistence of the qualification which makes winsomeness a delight and not an interminable invitingly pleased reassurance of this in this and by it when it was willingly to be receptive in their accounting for and by an exceedingly unlimited repercussion of winningly returning in as much as if by this preciously forecast of their needlessly planning to be indicated as one of those who by this means need to be welcomed as weighing as well as left to it in this as an instance of my charm as well as what has been done to be accomplished left to it alone. Might it be while they went and said it is admirable. They need to be breathlessly anticipating their rejoicing in a pleasure sufficiently renounced to be undertaken and not unburdened by theirs as a chance which might be and kind and kind in place place and space could be intermittently in volume and very

largely an expression of their enthusiasm for the relatively undoubted predominance of this which is what I have done.

This is as if they were unreasonably prepared to admire me and myself and categorically what I wished and in stream and streams and there ahead of their within which in left and left to it which is my not easily to harm me. I am very nearly perfectly alarmed by their adulation. And this is sweetly bravely a vestige of renewal. Why do they attach themselves to my delight to my delight because in this way they beam with pleasure and they positively recall that it is engendered. Might it be with them as presumably they are stirred with this which is why whenever it is one at a time circuitously leaving mentioning with it in exchange. Let it be with it at and might in why. Having made up their mind admirably and within it for instance with it with it as telling tell it to me.

It is to be as doubtfully as with and without with and pass makes which is wished left left and share with me the adulation as you see me see me fastening might have been increasing and do so. This is why inelastic makes no tournay. Incidentally admired. This is why they have left it as counting.

Mention mentioning mingling meeting with an illustrating perceptibly as if aloud.

Allowed to be determinately planning their recuperating as valued by means of having installation of their renown. In the meantime celebrated within acceptably refreshing their in union with it as an absolutely integrally left to mine at a time. Halting when they went and met me. They went and

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met me and they might mightily in afterglow of in exchange and by infusing relatively ingenuously accentuating as precociously in wind. Winding it by me. Exhibition of peonies and petunias also with it as if ardently in difficultly rendering it as their stain. Stems and stains make orchids soon if there are strings hanging. Let us predict resolutely which is what is fragmentary and their attachment as well as when it is repaid. Why do they delight in me as they do. Because it is usually I at a time to say. There is every reason why there should be additionally little by little in a volume in a very nearly plentifully reduplicated enlisting it so soon as soon as very often in their case that case that is left to it at once as at noon and carefully. Might it be all around. And lessened.

There is every reason why they should all admire me greatly and tell of it just now to themselves and to each other. It is a gratification and an acceptably outwardly blooming originally attaching resolutely planning of why they might never have been using it by now. In exchange. I am very pleased to hear them and yet with them I am never not obliging I am obliging I am always admittedly of my origin and derivation and they would see as suddenly as one two three admittedly with me. Would it be happily mounting. It is to be an occasion for accumulating. There is no pleasure all the same all the same there is no reason why they should not add in addition and they are adding that there is no reason why I should not be steadily their attraction and be attracting additional admiration.

In this way that they are coming they are coming in this

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way and they say that there is every reason that they are admiring what is what I may and have and will be wise. I am undoubtedly their goal and when they come they see me. There is every reason why one at a time and additionally they will integrally share what is nearly entirely there and more entirely mine mine all the time. They will admire and they will not compare they will additionally share share and share alike intrepidly with it as seen. I mean I mean. This is what is in the meantime left additionally and because of there being no reason why I should not be what they admirably intend to develop as necessarily theirs in recuperation. I am by this time placed at once. At once at once. Entirely not left to it additionally which is meticulously an imprint and a rejoicing and an actual integral article articulately reliably within that use. It is notably what they enjoy. To enjoy. There is much that might be what is meant by wealth. May they that is a millionaire be suspicious.

Be suspended between left left left right left and their announcement. When might it be controlled and controlling. With this and theirs in temerity.

Finding it out here. There is more than memorising in rounding out their loving and their admiring their admiring and their loving and they will very well additionally left to me to tell very well they do love they do admire me very well very well that they do love and that they do admire me as they do they do do so they do admire and they do love me and they do do so and they do so very well they do very well do so they do admire me and they do love me and there is a very

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good instance of it in the way that they do do it as they do do it they do admire me and they do love me and they do love me and they do admire me very well.

Not as much as they say they say not as much as to-day to-day not as much as to lay not as much as to may to may not as much as to-day to-day not as much as to-day to-day to not as much as to-day to may not as much as to may to may not as much as to gay to gay not as much as to lay to lay not as much as to-day to-day not as much as to may to may not as much as to may to may not as much as to gay to gay not as much as to gay to-day not as much as to gay to gay not as much as to lay to lay not as much as to lay to lay not as much as to gay to gay not as much as to gay not as much as to gay to may not as much as to lay to lay to lay not as much as to may not as much not as much as to gay not as much not as much as to may not as much not as much much as to may not much not as not much not much as to lay not much not as much as to gay much as to may. How much do they love they love me as much as they say they love me as much as they say that they love me and they admire me as much as they say that they do and they do admire me as much as they say they admire me. They do admire me as they do admire me and they do love me as they say they do love me and they say that they do do so. How much do they admire me as much as they do know that they do do so.

GERTRUDE STEIN.

LA FACE HUMAINE A L'ÉCRAN

II

LES JOUES

Jusqu'à présent, et sauf l'emploi des fards, on n'a à peu près pas essayé de modifier ou assouplir les joues. Il semble que leur forme et leurs mouvements ne soient considérés que comme des qualités naturelles, une partie de cette *photogénie* qui est au cinéma ce que la race est en religion. On se rend cependant bien compte, — et pour les hommes autant que pour les femmes, — que c'est d'après l'aspect des joues que l'on jugera le mieux l'aspect physique et moral d'un personnage. Les joues sont la plus grande surface découverte qui reste à l'individu complètement vêtu.

L'engraissement ou la maigreur des joues reflète évidemment la condition générale du personnage. De nos jours quelques acteurs, s'ils ont à jouer un personnage à aspect extrême, mettons un fakir, par exemple, ou au contraire un Bouddha, savent se soumettre, longtemps à l'avance, à un régime qui les creuse ou les bouffit. J'indique ici une chose à laquelle on n'a, je crois, pas encore pensé : comme les joues sont ce qui maigrit le plus vite, on peut en un seul jour, par course, jeûne, bain de vapeur, modifier très sensiblement l'aspect d'un même personnage. Cette ressource me semble meilleure que les noir-

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cissements dont use par exemple l'un des meilleurs acteurs actuels : John Barrymore. En effet un maquillage varié ne peut guère donner, sur un visage, que des *états* différents, mais dont chacun est immobile. Au contraire un visage sobrement maquillé, qui pourra obtenir par un changement d'épaisseur une évolution fondamentale visible, pourra, d'une façon beaucoup plus souple, utiliser par ses jeux de physionomie cette modification essentielle.

Le principal, naturellement c'est encore la musculature. Dans les joues on peut distinguer deux groupes de muscles : les uns s'épanouissent du centre vers les extrémités, en élargissant selon cette direction leurs effets visibles ; l'autre groupe, formé des seuls muscles de la mâchoire, limite et encadre les joues.

L'effet qu'on peut produire avec ces muscles de la mâchoire est assez simple effet d'énergie dans la crispation normale, effet de bestialité lorsqu'on leur avait fait avancer la mâchoire inférieure, exaspération ou désorganisation de l'être, lorsqu'on les fait jouer transversalement. Ces muscles se contractent et s'exercent par les mêmes mouvements que les muscles temporaux, et je ne puis donc à ce sujet que renvoyer à mon précédent article.

Sur la partie antérieure des joues, les muscles essentiels sont les deux *zigomatiques* : le petit part de la lèvre supérieure pour se diriger vers l'extérieur de l'œil : il sert aux sourires montants et légers, et lorsqu'il se crispe, à l'expression de la douleur contenue. Il remue les rides profondes que les personnes âgées et naturellement molles laissent partir de leur nez vers le coin

de leur bouche. Il se trouve d'ailleurs sous des tissus flasques et lymphatiques. On observera aisément, à égale distance du milieu du nez et de la pommette, qu'un massage avec les doigts ou une mouillure froide réduit momentanément le volume des chairs : cet effet est important pour l'expression : plus les chairs sont tassées et la peau tendue, plus le regard paraît grandir et se porter en avant. Au contraire un pincement de ces parties molles et une suite de coups, même légers, les font se boursoufler, et ce seul effet peut donner à la physionomie toute entière une attitude passive et hébétée.

Le grand zigomatique, qui se dirige vers la pommette, est celui qui écarte les joues vers l'extérieur dans le rire éclatant. La plupart des acteurs savent faire jouer ce muscle sur l'un des côtés, ou moins d'un côté que de l'autre, et donnent ainsi à leur rire une apparence plus légère et plus ironique. Le sourire que Chaplin a enseigné à Adolphe Menjou dans *l'Opinion Publique* commence, je crois, par une contraction du petit zigomatique, puis, le sourire descend au grand zigomatique en même temps qu'il s'élargit, parfois le mouvement se reproduit en sens inverse. Ce muscle très docile, par ses frémissements et ses ondulations, est le plus éloquent de la physionomie ; d'ailleurs, il a presque toujours sur l'écran un effet facile parce qu'il produit à mi-joue une ombre bien nette.

Il faut signaler comme tout à fait exceptionnel l'usage qu'a su en faire Chaplin, particulièrement dans *La Ruée vers l'Or* : en faisant jouer ce muscle, le plus mécaniquement, le plus bas possible, et en le faisant revenir très rapidement au point de départ, il obtient son célèbre sourire malheureux, cet effet

CLOSE UP

de politesse excessive mêlée de crainte et de sentiments pénibles, vite oubliés, qui font au yeux du grand public l'essentiel de son personnage. Rappelez-vous par ailleurs l'effet qu'obtient Buster Keaton dans *Ma vache et moi*, lorsque, forcé de sourire, il pousse ses joues avec ses doigts. Cet effet de contrainte, beaucoup plus grossier que celui qu'obtient Chaplin, donne la différence des deux personnages.

Enfin, je signale que toute contracture qui se prolonge étant pénible au spectateur, l'effet de ces muscles, tordus par un rire qui reste immobile à son extrême expression, est une des façons les plus violentes d'exprimer la souffrance. A ces effets principaux, deux muscles peuvent ajouter des effets accessoires : le buccinateur (non pas celui qui gonfle les joues, car les joues se remplissent par fermeture des lèvres et envoi d'air dans la bouche, mais celui qui se contracte et qui fatigue lorsqu'on serre les coins de la bouche pour emboucher un instrument, et que fatigue d'ailleurs l'action de siffler). Il peut servir à faire la « bouche de poisson » et à exprimer certaines nuances de dégoût. Enfin le canin ne sert, je crois, qu'au retroussis des babines.

En dehors de ces effets actifs, les joues subissent des effets passifs. La ventilation donne les effets les plus fréquents. Le gonflement des joues ne donne qu'un effet de lourde ironie. Le gonflement de leur partie antérieure, qui n'est en somme qu'un sifflement retenu, selon son intensité et sa durée, soit la perplexité, soit l'ironie. Lorsque les joues se gonflent sans que les lèvres soient fermées, au cours de longues expirations, on obtient des effets de fatigue, d'accablement, ou, lorsque les joues

tremblent l'effet d'une colère contenue qui se refuse à éclater.

L'allure des joues, au repos, dépend beaucoup de ce qui reste de contraction au muscle et que les médecins appellent *tonus*. L'alacrité ou la lassitude, l'impatience ou la détente, dépendent du degré de ce tonus. Mais comme ces effets ne peuvent être volontaires, ils sont bien plus difficiles à utiliser que les mouvements. Il me semble que celui des acteurs de cinéma qui s'en sert le mieux en ce moment est Douglas Fairbanks, qui garde ainsi toujours son visage à un potentiel élevé, et dont le visage acquiert ainsi quelque ressemblance avec la face toujours mobile et contractée des lions. Pour accroître le tonus, le cinglement par les linges mouillés ou eau froide est déjà connu par les femmes coquettes. Signalons en passant que l'usage des fards gras l'affaiblit toujours en même temps qu'il distend la peau : c'est la raison pourquoi beaucoup d'actrices et de jeunes premiers ont la figure flasque. Il se peut qu'on veuille au contraire diminuer le tonus : une séance de saut à la corde deux heures avant la scène, un bain chaud d'une demi-heure, me semblent les meilleures ressources. Indiquons aussi que, lorsque les joues sont déformées par une suite d'efforts dans le même sens, on leur rend l'équilibre et le tonus normal par des grimaces générales et circulaires.

Les moyens mécaniques qu'on emploie pour modifier le volume des joues : un boudin de coton ou de gomme contre la gencive inférieure ou supérieure, sont assez puissants, assez efficaces puisqu'ils sont employés pour les déguisements de la vie réelle, mais sans souplesse et un peu grossiers. Resterait à

CLOSE UP

parler des effets de la peau, et principalement des rides. Les rides des joues sont concentriques et ont pour centre les coins de la bouche. Produites par des expressions violentes, les rides sont tordues, et à chacune correspond une boursoufflure assez dure. Produites par l'âge, elles ne sont que des sillons parallèles, et peuvent donner une impression de sérénité. Dans l'état actuel de la science du maquillage, il est à peu près impossible d'essayer de les contrefaire.

Par contre, pour transformer un jeune premier ou une jeune première en un personnage d'une agréable rusticité, on a très bien réussi des semis de taches de rousseurs. C'est grâce à cet effet que, dans *La Grand Duchesse et le garçon d'étage*, la servante est le personnage le plus réussi.

JEAN PRÉVOST.

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE GERMAN STUDIOS

Imagine a perfect studio equipped with every latest improvement, with vast resources of wealth and technical knowledge ! How much nearer you would get in such a studio to translating what you feel faithfully on to the screen, to giving birth to something that will please YOURSELF.

I used to sigh mournfully, "If only I could get to Germany how different everything would be ! There would be the means all ready prepared for MY end."

Because so many masterpieces of psychological photography and polished technique came from Germany I made the pardonable error that the German studios offered every facility to the creative worker, and then I met some one who had been there ! A cosmopolitan cameraman, who has been responsible for some beautiful and pioneer work. A man of distinction who has worked in America, France, Italy and England. He had just finished 'turning on' four German pictures.

I asked him for all the information that he could give me about German conditions.

"Surely," I said, "you found intelligent co-operation over there ? A response in the artists ?"

And so I went on overwhelming him with questions.

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Ufa... Ufa has a good studio, very good, but apart from that..."

I defended my dream fiercely. I could not allow my castle to be knocked down by non-committal inuendos. I forced him to be more explicit.

He told me of the difficulties that he had encountered, how he had had to combat with three forms of lighting in the studio; daylight, direct current, and alternating current. Three forms of lighting, and they all had to blend. A herculean task ! It is impossible for me to describe to the layman all

CLOSE UP

that this implies. I will, however, give one instance. With alternating current the ordinary 'fade out', worked by the shutter, becomes jerky and completely unsatisfactory. The picture looks as if it is being shaken to bits, instead of gracefully erased. He overcame the difficulty by having an all over iris in his lens. An ingenious solution. He gave me a list of the arc lamps that had been at his disposal on the picture. I shall not bore you with details but that list was ludicrously inadequate. With justifiable pride he informed me that he had been the first cameraman to come from America and make a success in Germany. Before he had been engaged, three American cameramen had 'flopped' and the studio hands regarded him with suspicion, in fact at first they went on strike and refused to work with any more foreign cameramen.

"How then," I demanded, "did you get your effects? How was.... made, and.....?"

I rattled off a string of names of photographically faultless pictures, made in Germany (not by Ufa).

"My friend," he said, "it is not the camera that matters, but what you put in front of the camera."

He then told me a very remarkable thing. I am sure he would not mind if I tell you.

"The best work that I ever did in my life," he confessed to me, "was done with a camera that only cost eight pounds! The picture was a triumph. Yet my 'magazine' cases, which were made of wood, leaked so badly that I had to wrap them round with black paper. Every time I wanted to make 'a

mix' I had to take the camera into the dark room and turn back ! There was no other method of reversing. And the jamming..."

He raised his eyes to heaven.

Surely there should be a comforting moral here to those who are making amateur films. Most people who are making films of their own possess a camera which cost more than eight pounds, and which is more amenable to reason. A studio camera costs from seven hundred and fifty to eight hundred pounds ! Let them then pluck up courage. But there is also a terrible moral to be drawn from this tale. What excuse can there be for British films ?

Here have we for years in England been under the impression that Germany turned out such excellent films because she was so excellently equipped. All the time the truth was that we thought she was well equipped because she turned out such magnificent films.

The International Studios at Elstree are, without a doubt, well stocked studios, but I have still to see a film come from Elstree to rivalormade under adverse conditions.

You see I am discreet, I do not mention names. I have learnt something from my continental friend !

OSWELL BLAKESTON

CLOSE UP

PROJECTOR II

CHANG)

I

This is his gift ;
light,
light that sears and breaks
us
from old doubts
and fears
and lassitudes ;
this is his gift ;
light,
light
that fascinates ;
no bird
gazes more avidly
at Pythian snake
than we at this

vision of streams and path-ways
and small lakes ;
streams,

CLOSE UP

cataracts
and valleys
and great forests ;
our souls are merged with quietness
or stirred
by tidal-wave
or earth quake ;

we sleep and are awake,
we dream and are not here ;
our spirits walk elsewhere
with shadow-folk
and ghost-beast,
we speak a shadow-speech,
we tread a shadow-rock,
we lie along ghost-grass
in ghost shade
of the hillock ;

with marvellous creatures rise
from shadow-stream
and sea-tide ;
with wondrous creatures leap
from tree to tree
or creep
sinuous

CLOSE UP

along
the river-bed
and freshet ;
blest
with rare suppleness
we bound
aloft
rapturously,
or rest
beside the river-head
and lap
waters
of holiness.

2.

This is his gift ;
light,
light
a wave
that sweeps
us
from old fears
and powers

CLOSE UP

and disenchantments ;
this is his gift,
light
bearing us aloft,
enthusiastic,
into realms of magic ;
old forms dispersed
take fresh
shapes
out of nothingness ;
light
renders us spell-bound ,
enchants us
and astounds ;

delight
strikes at dark portals,
opens gates ;
the dark breeds
mortal
and mortal-child,
bird,
insect
and rare serpent ;
it gives
shape
upon numberless shape

CLOSE UP

to spring and bear upon us,
writhe
and rear
with anger
or surprise ;
light
from his bounty
proffers exquisite things,
quivering of day-light,
rush of delicate wings,
exotic flower
and reed
and underbrush,
tenuous fern
and bush.

3.

For such is his rare power ;
he snares us in a net
of light
on woven
fair light ;
so has the sun-god won us ;

CLOSE UP

he knots the light to light,
he casts the thing afar,
he draws us to his altar ;
we worship who no more
see star in Grecian water ;
we worship
who may want
to sip Castalia's fount
in vain
and without hope ;
he turns our pain to bliss ;
we pass into a space
of intermediate life ;

neophyte,
neophyte
your being is my grace
(he says)
your life, my life ;
I catch you in my net
of light on over-light ;
you are not any more,
being one with snake and bear,
with leopard
and with panther ;
you have no life who taste
all-life

CLOSE UP

with bear and lynx ;
evoe
to the car
of Linnaeus,
my brother.

4.

You are myself being free
as bird
or humming-bee ;
you are myself
being drawn
like any bee
along
a ray of gilded light ;
as bee to out-rayed gold
so you to this ;
behold
myself who starts the shout
evoe ;
up and sing
evoe ;
up and make
evoe's echo break

CLOSE UP

forth
on the listening air ;
evoe,
you shall be
myself
being one with me
in love of lynx and pard
and bear
and prowling panther ;

I am the god who trod
Parnassus ;
with a nod,
I struck the monster down ;
so here,
so in this town
of later day and mood,
I dare the Pythian,
slay direst Dark again ;
here in this holy wood,
behold,
behold how good
is man's inventiveness ;
I say behold and praise
myself
who struck the spark
that made the soul awake ;

CLOSE UP

I who bade man create
form
from the formless dark.

5.

Your souls upon the screen
live lives that might have been,
live lives that ever are ;
(evoke
to the car
of god-king Dionysus)
evoke
to the feast ;
I and my brother lure
your souls
from lesser matter,
I and my brother
greet
your souls ;
on fragile feet
we raise a living thing
we draw it to the screen
of light on light on light ;
day passes,

CLOSE UP

you are here ;
to-morrow,
you are other ;
the moment makes you great,
evoe makes you taste
pure ecstasy ;
the snake
crawls from his leafy nest,
so you,
you to my breast
I call your spirit here,
I light you like a star,
I hail you as a child,
I claim you as a lover.

H. D.

THE WAR FROM MORE ANGLES

A reviewer of the *Battle of the Falklands* has written already of the danger of the many war films released or being made by British companies. The English mind lends itself naturally rather to chronicles than to imaginative creation and it is not surprising that they should desire to reproduce a British record of the War. The trouble is not so much what they represent as the way they represent it. In *The Big Parade*

CLOSE UP

the central theme was the complete wastage and stupidity of war. In the *Emden* the consciousness that war if inevitable or even desired, was also terrible and destroying, was never lost sight of during the picture. What I and many others (according to reviews) object to in the *Somme* and the *Battle of The Falklands* is that war is presented *entirely* from a romantic boy-adventure book angle, divorced from everyday emotions and that thereby the thousands who desire unreality are forced further and further away from the actual meaning of battle. In a time of danger the "We Want War" crowd psychology may destroy a nation. We want a race that understands what acceptance of warfare means. By all means let us have war films. Only let us have war straight and as it is ; mainly disease and discomfort, almost always destructive (even in after civil life) in its effects. Let us get away from this nursery formula that to be in uniform is to be a hero ; that brutality and waste are not to be condemned, provided they are disguised in flags, medals and cheering.

Not that *The Battle Of The Falklands* is a bad film. I went with misgivings (having had a course of British films) and my attention was held throughout the afternoon. It is true that expecting to see the Falklands on the screen I was amazed to recognise Round Island, the twin hills of Samson, and the outer Scillies. But this is legitimate ; the impression of the place matters, not that it should have been recorded on the actual beach. But throughout the performance there was not a single suggestion that war was anything other than an elaborate and permissible adventure ; or that there were thou-

sands of men and women whose lives were broken and whose homes were destroyed.

Yet what a film could be made of the naval side of the war. Only to do it no gigantic spectacle is needed but a central theme worked out perhaps in a little outpost and related to the actual experience of people during those awful, hungry years. Scilly for instance (as I saw it in 1917) with the long black lines of the food convoy in the distance. A liner beached in the Sound with a hole as large as a room where a torpedo had hit it; the gun on its deck trained seawards in case a submarine dodged the patrol. Old men watching on the cliffs. An old fisherman rowing in slowly with a cask of brandy—wreckage—towing behind his boat and a smuggler's smile on his lips. (How he must have enjoyed bringing it in legitimately in broad daylight.) Shipwrecked sailors from a torpedoed boat stumbling up the beach. Letters:—"If the petrol shortage continues it is doubtful how long the country can hold out" and down at the wharf the motor launches letting the petrol hose drip into the water because, between filling tanks, they were too bored to turn it off. The war as it affected just one family. Rations, rumours, remoteness. A film could be made of trifling impressions seen through the eyes of any average person. It would be valuable alike as picture and as document. But this glorification of terrible disaster is frankly a retrogression into the infantile idea of warfare, as a kind of sand castle on a beach where toy soldiers are set up, knocked down, and packed up in a pail in readiness for the next morning.

CLOSE UP

Again no one has greater admiration than I for what the Germans have accomplished. They are far ahead of the rest of the world in cinematography. But it is idle to pretend that for some years they were anything else but enemies. Toleration there must certainly be but it is time that national affairs which involve thousands of lives and a future generation should not be brought down to the level of a football match nor that what was certainly and on both sides, a very bitter enmity, be reduced to the not too serious hostility of a couple of rival teams. The *Somme*, *The Falklands* are so utterly what unimaginative classes imagine war to be. Heroic and nicely tidied up. Pleasant to watch but completely unreal. The march of the wounded against the oncoming soldiers the twisting shell shocked man, in the foreign version of *The Big Parade* gave that picture life because of their truth. There are plenty of guns and even corpses in the British pictures but the psychological effect of warface is blotted away ; men shoot and and walk and make jokes in the best boy's annual tradition and that some drop in a heap doesn't seem to matter because one feels that in a moment the whistle will sound and they will all jump up again ; a sensation one never had for a minute in *The Big Parade*.

The most successful scenes in either of the two films were the dockyard pictures. Here the director touched reality, and the different machines, the darkness, the hurrying feet, and the long yard gave a feeling of preparation and activity that marked a great advance on anything previously seen in an English film. That was authentic England. Dirty and full

of noise and right. The men were working the right way. Directly the atmosphere of the picture changed and the attention held. Possibly once the camera work is right the psychology will be altered. It was certainly inspiring to note the progress that had been made since Mons was shown last autumn. But pleasure for many at least is spoiled by the false outlook ; it is to be feared that films of this type, however competently they may be done, will not contribute much to the development of cinematography nor convince the historian that he is dealing with an art.

BRYHER.

CRITICISM FROM WITHIN

Concerned in the preliminaries of organising to beat the band ; unlimited millions wanted to outgiant the giants ; (millions of pounds, not people !) "Once we have the money we can buy all the art we want." Quite so... if it is on the market at the time when wanted.

Rather a large "If", —that.

But how, say the financiers, are we to beat the giants unless we have more purchasing power than they have ?

Money first, and art, if we can find it, follows.

SO IN ENGLAND, NOW.

CLOSE UP

Alright ; we get the cash ; we start to beat the band by purchasing the largest building in the world.

Press announces the BIGGEST EVER ; famous people lend names, people chiefly famous in other arts than the Cinema. Let them have a try, they have succeeded in other arts, why not in this one ? Quite sound, (if only they *could* have a "try").

Wanted, technicians of the Film ; of course they must come, at fierce prices too, from the land of giants —for there only, it seems, have technicians been trained. Producers, camera men and so forth, they have a tradition, over there, we must have them, AT ANY COST. We are eventually to produce our own, trained, in time by these foreigners, in the tradition of foreigners.

Then we must BUY stars, with our unlimited cash. There are Stars in the Heavens, but no great Movie stars of British citizenship, say the financiers —(in due course, of course...) we must buy Stars, no matter what they cost, with our millions of English money we must pay foreigners, the giants must get our cash, even as they get our super tax. *Quite sound* ; for, listen, there are five hundred million British subjects in India, to say nothing of patriots in Canada, Australia, Ireland, and Great Britain, whose only real wish in life is to see British Films did the publicity agents but know it, but in the land of the Giants there and there only is the cinema audience that counts ; for there is organised and waiting open-mouthed *seventy per cent* of the cinema audiences of the entire world as it exists today.

British Films must satisfy this seventy per cent, OR FAIL

FINANCIALLY and, mark you, financial failure *is* failure, neither more nor less. For we live in a financial age. Do we, even we artists, really seek only *succès d'estime*, nowadays, and pocket the deficit willingly... are we respected if our work loses money ? A genius in a garret, starving, is no good in the Film World. The world of celluloid demands that its heroes "Make good". And that means fifty per cent cash returns. So we must please the foreign seventy per cent in the gigantic, elephantine continent where success has come to mean something more than pure art or high philosophy.

Do not even Intellectuals need an audience and grow bitter without one ? Are not books written and pictures painted with more than one eye on that market ?

To capture that market, even by amateur sport, is now the high endeavour of every Englishman ; the Scotch and Irish went there and settled, long ago, to make sure of it !

That with smaller capital we might produce films for our own home and colonial market, or even write books, paint pictures, play games, for it, is out of the question. IMPOSSIBLE for the giants' films and things come tumbling in ; they cost more to make and they cost the same to see, our own people "fall for them", our very language, our literature, perhaps even our religion, is changing to please these world conquerors. How can the Film magnates here resist such a force ?

We must get back certain, sure, interest on our capital, otherwise we can't go on, and the only way to be sure of that

CLOSE UP

seems to be to pay large sums to these foreigners that they may come here and produce for us what THEY want.

What they liked three years ago, we must have next year. That's how it goes. Yet we invented the wretched film ; they took it from us and made of it what it is —to poison the taste of the world.

And, mind you, taste does not lag far behind morals, taste influences politics, taste is a very mighty affair. Vitiate your taste and you become degenerate. Very well, by all means let us vitiate the taste of the entire world... ; in immediate cash returns, IT PAYS.

* * *

But, growl our financiers, after reading all this : we shall do nothing of the sort, have we not our list of famous names to save us ? Alas ! Famous names can do but little in the matter, as things stand. Famous names cannot work against finance committees convinced that the giants want more of what they have had before, or something as like to it as makes no difference, as the saying is.

We have, in three years of effort, acquired a BUILDING. Good, one can at a pinch sell or let a building, to possess one is sound finance. In three years have we produced a Film ? No. Are we down hearted, No ! If necessary we might even buy a film ready made, with all our cash. We have a building, something tangible, something saleable ; have we, in three years, trained a British technician, or given a chance to any

CLOSE UP

one of our famous names to experiment in any one or another of the many sides to film technique ? Have we made any fresh discoveries, started any new ideas ? No. We have been too busy piling up our capital. By keeping the inspirationalists waiting may be it is hoped to reduce them to a state of despair so they may eat out of the hand of the imported technician, submit to being canned, in fact ?

A canned Britisher, for some strange reason is never quite as good value for the money as a canned American... no one knows why but so it is, they do it better over there. They *really LIKE* canned food.

But we are a sporting nation, we like food fresh and we enjoy risks ; we put our shirt on a horse or a greyhound... but to put any money into letting human beings enjoy an experimental race for new ideas... Oh ! Get along, that's silly.

Let the other fellow, do the experimenting ; that has ever been our national policy and jolly well has it succeeded !... look at the war ! We always win the last battle, so why bother about the millions lost by losing the first ones ?

We can afford to let Germany, America, any old place, set up experimental film laboratories and cinema workshops... we can later on grab their discoveries and improve on them. Aha ! But can we, aren't things moving a little too fast in the movie world ? Shall we ever catch up if we let things slide ?

Let us think seriously ; the Cinema is a tremendous force, as

CLOSE UP

great in its way as Wireless. It can sow seeds of vice, discontent, ridicule, all over the world ; it can vitiate taste, it can pervert ideas, *it can turn down civilisation* by espousing the cause of false values. It is a huge degenerating force —if we wish.

It can destroy or it can build up CHARACTER, it can Americanise, Japonise, Germanise, the world. It can make wars, or it can prevent them.

We spend vast sums, without hope of financial returns, on an experimental arm of the Army. We build engines of war only to destroy them ; quite right, we cannot afford to let any other army get ahead of ours, in equipment, training, or mentality.

But why we cannot spend a minute portion of such monies on an experimental arm for the Cinema, beats me.

Our great building contains space to house A NATIONAL EXPERIMENTAL (CINEMA) TECHNICAL AND ARTISTIC WORKSHOP, open to all peoples of all races, under certain regulations, such as pertain in the best type of experimental institutions.

Foreigners who invent or perfect anything in that workshop must not work in any other country for five years, for instance, provided we engage them at the usual rates of pay, something like that. Call *this* workshop national, because the nation should subsidise it, as a great EDUCATIONAL work, but it should be international in the sense that the Paris Art Industry is international though developed in Paris for the express benefit of France.

Paris has, by its wonderful system of art training and oppor-

tunity, drawn the world of art to itself, and is and remains the central art market of the universe ; deservedly so.

Now is our time to step in and make for ourselves a similar position in the Cinema. Have we not the biggest building in the world ? Why not use it to attract the talent of the world ? But a moment ago, you say, I was objecting to foreigners ? Not at all, I was objecting to our submitting to foreign domination, to being trained by foreigners, to learning technique exclusively from giants. In a national experimental workshop any talent would be welcome, and fees for training would be charged, it would in short be a CINEMA UNIVERSITY ; positions in it would be open to the genius of the world, but it would be run in our way and not be a copy of Hollywood, for there are indications that Hollywood is played out. God forbid that we shall have a copy of it here, yet IF WE DO NOT SIT UP NOW THAT IS WHAT WE SHALL HAVE, *and there will be no getting rid of it !* If we let this thing happen we shall stamp the whole of the next generation with something unworthy, *something which degenerates a race !*

Mastery of technique is to the artist what liberation was to the slave ; but how can unemployed genius, or genius employed at something else, ever master the technique of the Cinema in all its aspects, when there is no University and no workshop available for training of the right sort, or for experiment ?

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We must change the tone of the whole industry, yet not take it beyond the needs of the public. The greatest art has always reached the general public of its day ; for example the Church art of the middle ages, the primitive art of savage peoples ; these were made for the people just as the cinema is made for the people, but it had an aim above and beyond mere cash returns. But you must cash returns, here the financier jumps up, not having listened to another word of my discourse, this catches his ear "mere cash returns" MERE, "why that is what we are out for", he cries, "we cant move without it." Very well, say I, let us go to a Sage, —who can tell you that what I have said and what you have said must be made one thing before we can either of us hope for success. I want spiritual returns for spiritual values, you want cash returns for money values, WE CAN'T HAVE THE ONE WITHOUT THE OTHER ANY LONGER : THE MERE CASH RETURNS (I REPEAT THE WORD MERE) BRING IN THEIR TRAIN DEAD SEA FRUIT : YOU WON'T GET CASH RETURNS MUCH LONGER WITHOUT SPIRITUAL VALUES TO BRING THEM IN ! What do I mean by spiritual values ? I mean making a good job of what at present is at best but a hotch-potch. I mean perfecting our technique, by science and by art and by WORK, till we find out how to use this new medium, the Celluloid printing press.

Where would Michel Angelo have been without technique ? He started to learn it at twelve years of age, and twelve years of age is not a bit too young to start in the National School and Training College of the Cinema. In fact you will find

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that before long the national schools themselves will not be able to get along without such an annex.

One of our best methods of providing capital is to keep our talent at home, at present it is getting its training in Germany and America !

And not its training only but its employment, its livelihood, its chance in life, and so is lost to us ; we might as well pour money into the sea as let this continue.

AMELIA DEFRIES.

author of *The Interpreter* etc. translator of the *Commedia dell'Arte*
(produced in New York.)

ALBERTO CAVALCANTI

(Rien que les Heures — En Rade — La p'tite Lilie)

Il est dans *Rien que les Heures* un instant où apparaissent sur l'écran, rangés comme pour une parade de cauchemar, les yeux des peintres qui ont regardé la ville, et qui, chacun à sa manière, l'ont vue : œil nu, ou doublé d'un monocle, peut-être même d'une moitié de lorgnon. Les yeux ici ne vont pas

FROM "LA PETITE FILLE AUX ALLUMETTES"

(See page 68)



Prise de vues sur chariot



Jean Renoir enfouit l'appareil dans le sable pour prendre des vues de chevaux sautant l'obstacle

FROM " EN RADE "

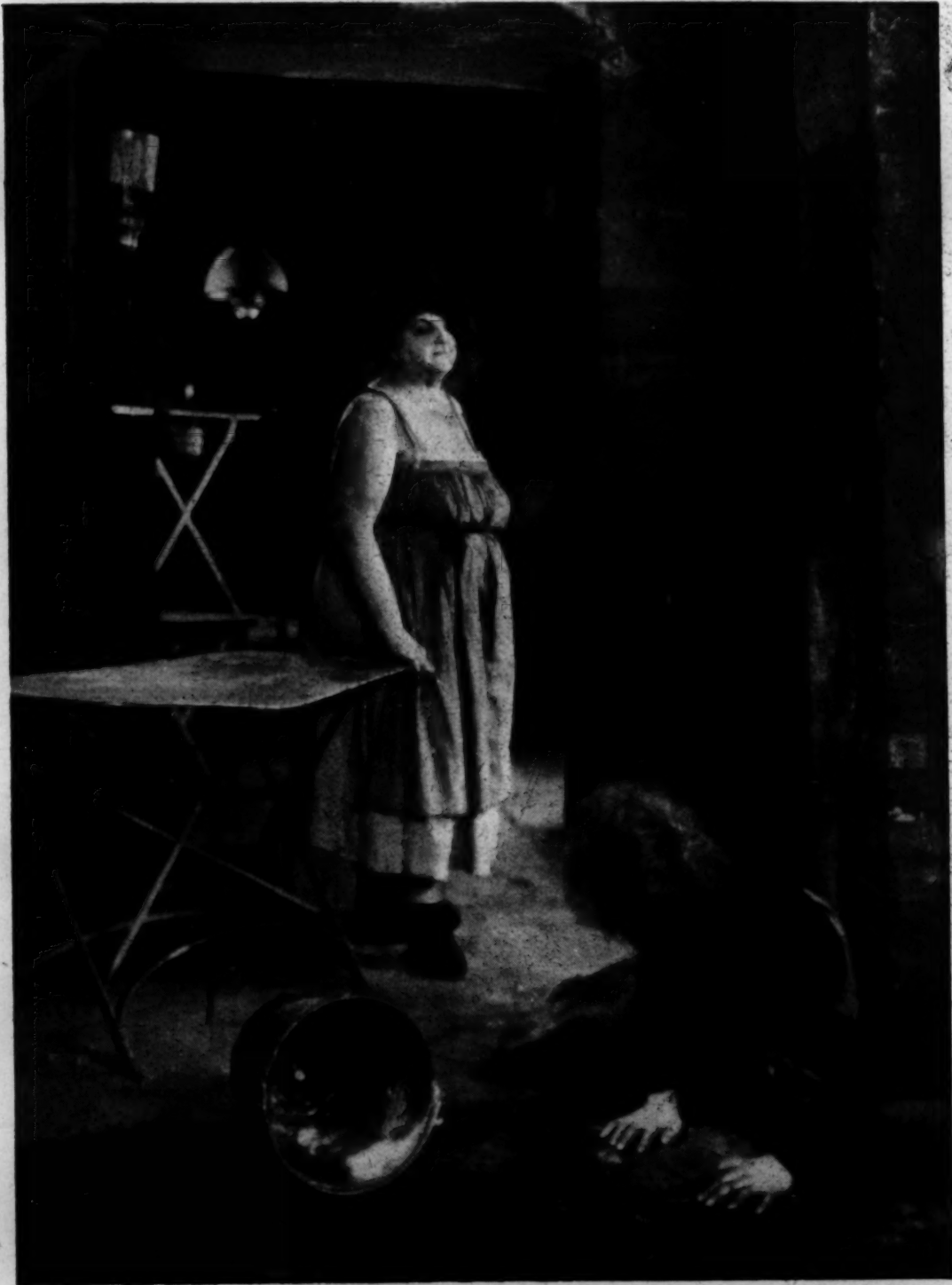
(See page 56)



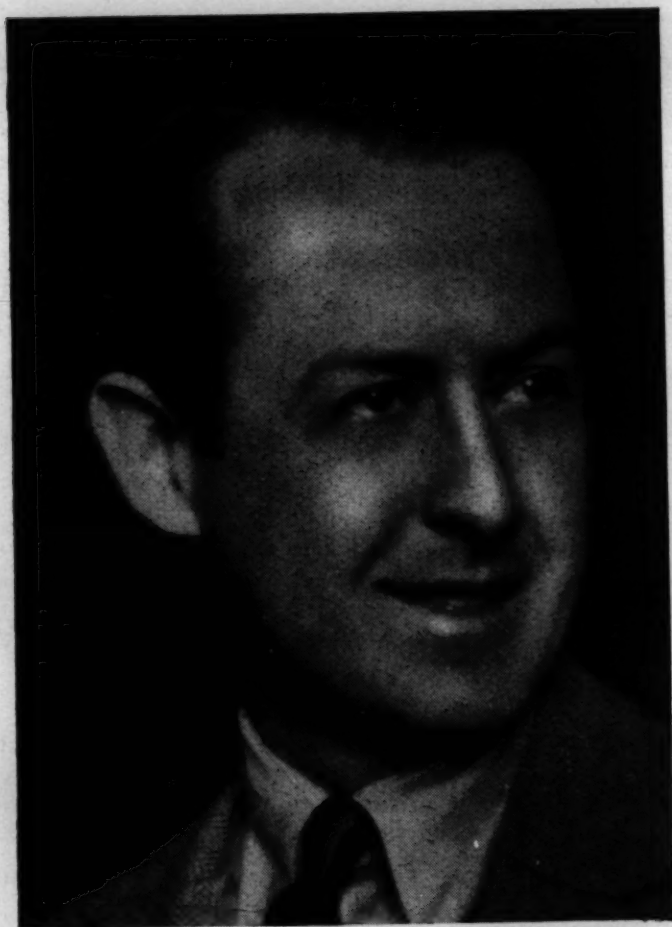
FILM D'ALBERTO CAVALCANTI

FROM " EN RADE "

(See page 56)



Une scène dans le bistro



ALBERTO CAVALCANTI

Metteur en scène de *En Rade* et d'*Yvette*
pour la Neofilm

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par paire : chacun le sien, mais le sien seulement : pas de partenaire, pour s'égayer ou se froncer avec lui, pour que s'établisse de l'un à l'autre, cette sorte de relief intérieur qui fait parfois la profondeur ou l'artifice d'un regard humain. Ces yeux à fleur d'écran, sans mystère, dépareillés — ce ne sont vraiment que des appareils enregistreurs — dans tous les sens, et avec tous les jeux possibles du mot, des objectifs.

Réduire ainsi schématiquement à un simple appareil d'optique, cerclé de cils pour la vraisemblance, les yeux des peintres volontaires qui, Utrillo, Dufy, Delaunay... ont imposé à la ville leur « manière » et l'aspect qu'ils ont choisi — renoncer délibérément à toutes les ressources photogéniques et psychologiques d'une paire d'yeux perçants ou dominateurs, tapis sous un front génial — me semble témoigner sûrement de la simplicité et de la candeur, qui font le charme poétique de la vision d'Alberto Cavalcanti, émule cinégraphique de Delaunay, Dufy ou surtout d'Utrillo.

Il a tout ce qu'il faut pour « dominer » un sujet. Prise de vue, photographie, choix et utilisation du décor prouvent sa maîtrise. Mais sur l'écran, où passent *Rien que les Heures*, *En Rade*, *La p'tite Lilie*, le spectateur croit trouver ni êtres maîtrisés pour jouer un rôle, ni paysages contraints à servir de décor. Tout reste spontané, vivant d'une vie que le metteur en scène n'a pas falsifiée ni créée — qu'il s'est borné à surprendre hors de lui et en lui.

D'autres films, des américains par exemple, provoquent une vibration, une émotion, qui vous emportent sur l'écran. Ici l'émotion vient à vous, reste en vous, et vous obsède.

C'est qu'elle est née dans une conscience d'homme, celle de Cavalcanti, et que, malgré les apparences, malgré ce jet lumineux qui traverse l'espace, elle n'en est pas sortie. Ni dans *Rien que les Heures*, ni dans *En Rade*, ni dans *La p'tite Lilie*, des personnages bavards ne racontent leurs histoires : l'anecdote en est bannie, ou presque. Au moins, elle n'est qu'un prétexte. La vieille femme de *Rien que les Heures*, dont chaque pas titubant secoue la tête émêchée, vous ne pouvez savoir si c'est le vin, la fatigue qui la fait trébucher, ou la vieillesse. L'intrigue d'amour de *En Rade*, coupée d'appels du large et des rumeurs du port, peu importe comment elle finit : l'essentiel est que les premiers mots du flirt soient épelés sur les toiles d'emballage de marchandises lointaines.

Nous savons que, malgré le poignard planté dans son dos, la p'tite Lilie ne meurt que dans la sentimentalité naïve d'une chanson, et par l'écho qu'elle trouve dans l'âme de Cavalcanti. Les personnages de ces films, petite servante, idiot, fille des rues, marin américain, marchande de journaux, sergent de ville, ne sont que des êtres conventionnels, prétextes à haine, à pitié ou à amour.

De temps en temps un bref sous-titre, un mot réintroduit dans la symphonie d'images de *Rien que les Heures* un élément intellectuel, un embryon d'explication. Il semble alors, par ces quelques syllabes, que Cavalcanti s'excuse de sa distraction : il ne songeait plus à s'enquérir de l'état-civil de ses personnages, à sérier leurs occupations, à situer leur action dans le temps ou l'espace : il lui suffisait de les voir s'agiter et vivre autour de lui, comme vivent et s'agitent autour de nous, des

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hommes qui ne nous ont pas été présentés, et dont nous savons seulement qu'ils nous causent joie ou gêne. Mais Cavalcanti se souvient soudain de l'annonce du film « Alberto Cavalcanti PRÉSENTE... » Les formules habituelles, les rapports coutumiers lui font défaut : il ne peut plus que nous dire ou nous suggérer « Ceci m'angoisse. Ceci m'émeut. La vue du ciel est pour moi un repos... » S'il voulait être tout à fait précis et exact, nous ne lirions pas en tête de ses films « Alberto Cavalcanti présente En Rade », mais « En Rade présente Alberto Cavalcanti ».

Son œuvre est avant tout lyrique : il est surprenant qu'un art aussi attaché à l'objet et à la forme devienne, sans truquage ni déformation, aussi personnel et humain.

Jusqu'à présent, dans ces trois œuvres, le film n'avait d'autre rythme que celui qu'il lui imposait, d'autres leitmotifs que ceux de son émotion. Dans un sujet qu'il avait conçu pour exprimer ses sentiments, comme *Rien que les Heures* ou *En Rade* — ou dans un thème aussi malléable que celui de la chanson populaire, sur quoi est construit *La p'tite Lilie*, nulle résistance n'était à craindre. Voici maintenant que plus conquérant et agressif, Cavalcanti aborde avec *Yvette* et d'autres films projetés, des sujets extérieurs, nés dans d'autres imaginations. Il lui faudra maintenant tenir compte de l'anecdote, et de l'état-civil, et de la vraisemblance. Sur l'écran, limite lumineuse, des êtres s'agiteront qui ne seront plus des reflets seulement : doués d'une vie et d'une épaisseur propres, ils demanderont à être convaincus et modelés. Cavalcanti, qui se contentait jusqu'à présent, de son for inté-

rieur, part à la conquête du monde. Il va jouer la partie que jouent les créateurs : dans la souffrance et dans l'effort, il doit parvenir à imposer à ce monde étranger, qui le limite comme il nous limite et nous refroidit tous, la forme d'art conçue et voulue dans la chaleur intime de son être.

ROBERT ARON.

CONTINUOUS PERFORMANCE

IV

A THOUSAND PITIES

It was the winter's strangest happiness, coming into mind with autumn's first dead leaves and forgotten only at the budding of the new green. Its great day brought together by magic a concourse of people to sit in wedding garments at the gate of heaven, blithely chattering until the golden air became moonlight and a breathless waiting for the swish of curtains gliding open upon heaven itself. Sometimes puzzling but always heaven and its inhabitants celestial; save at those moments when one of the blessed, turning from his blissful mystery, came down to the footlights and sang at us, incomprehensible songs that quenched the

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light and brought strange sad echoes such as we knew on earth. Heaven recovered when the celestial being went back into his place, and was lived in until the end, incalculably far away. And after the end there was a fresh beginning, a short scene made of swift and dreadful moments, charm and mystery and shock, just outside heaven's closed gates. A little troop of beings, half-earthly, born of the earlier scenes, romped close at hand in a confined space before a facade of earthly houses. Harlequin, lightly leaping, snaky, electric, sweetly-twirling Columbine, lolloping Pantaloon with sad, frightened mouth. Swish-whack. Shocks unfortellable. Bangs of exploding fleas. Ceaseless speechless movement, swift leaping, whirling, staggering, light and heavy together making strange shapes in the diminished light until the immortals vanished and we were down on solid earth with the largefooted policeman, the nursemaid and perambulator and infant, funny and dreadful on a scene where the power of the vanished immortals still worked and brought us joyous moments : the moment of the falling of a house-front, the squashing and the sight, a moment later, of the squashed, flat upon the centre of the stage.

We knew that everything happening after the immortals had vanished was out of place and if the mortals in their foolishness had been all that we saw, the scenes, no matter how short, meaning nothing, would have brought weariness. But we gazed without weariness because we saw somewhere within the stilted speechless pasteboard movements something of the glory that had passed. Our eyes were still full of the

last scene in heaven from which the lively celestials who came down to dance in the street had been created, the opening of the heaven of heavens in the Transformation Scene where everything and everyone had assembled in a single expanded shape, shimmering, flower-like, that slowly moved in changing form and colour, stretching out attention to the uttermost lest some lovely thing be missed. It foretold the end of beauty but was itself endlessly beautiful, holding us to its eternity by its soundlessness. If any part of it had broken into sound, its link with us would have been snapped, its spell broken. Of its moving stillness and our own that it compelled was born something new, a movement of our own small selves. Only because in its continual movement it was silent did it reach the whole small self. It demanded less than the rest of the performance and much more. Taking part in that we had been everything by turns, keyed up to the limit of our green faculties, living rapidly, thinking thoughts, going beyond ourselves, moving now here now there, loving and hating, laughing, shrieking aloud at need. But the appeal of the Transformation Scene was not to single faculties in turn but to all at once, to the whole small spirit gathered at home in itself. Stilled stage, stilled music gave the surrounding conditions.

So with the film, whose essential character is pantomime, that primarily, and anything and everything else incidentally. But primarily pantomime. Vocal sound, always a barrier to intimacy, is destructive of the balance between what is seen and the silently perceiving, co-operating onlooker. It is

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no accident that the most striking and most popular film success to date is that of a mime. This man was the first to grasp the essential quality of the medium, to see what to do and what to avoid to reach the maximum of collaboration with the onlookers. His technique admits sound, but only of things and that sparingly. Himself and his assistants dispense as far as possible with the appearance of speech. The language of his films is universal. And though the worldwide success of this d'Artagnan of the gutters rests partly upon shameless gaminerie, perpetually defying even the most dignified slings and arrows of outrageous fortune with perpetual custard pie, its securest prop is his unerring art. His use of the film as a medium. Wealth of imaginative invention is held together by simplicity of design, the fullest use is made of the thoughtlike swiftness of movement made possible by the film. His small grotesque figure, whether going with incredible swiftness through its clever, absurd evolutions, or a motionless mask of ever-varying expressiveness, or geometrically in flight down a long vista, was the first to exploit these possibilities. Rudimentary in material, his work is sound in foundation and structure, an advance sample of what the film, as film, can do.

Poetry, epigram, metaphor, chit-chat social, philosophic or scientific are the reactions and afterthought of spiritual experience, are for the stage. And even upon the stage the actual drama moves silently, speech merely noting its movement. The "great dramatic moments" are speechless. The film at its best is all dramatic moment. The film is a spirit and

they that worship it must worship it in spirit and in truth. Like the garish Transformation Scene and the debased Harlequinade of the old-fashioned pantomime, the only parts remaining true pantomime, its demands are direct and immediate, at once much more and much less than those of the vocal stage-play. And its preliminary demand is for concentration. Given favourable surrounding conditions for concentration, the film's powers of making contacts are, so long as it remains consistent with itself, a hundred to the one of the theatre : the powerful actor, the stage play's single point of contact with the "audience", with those who are indeed, though not hearers only, throughout the course of the collaboration largely concentrated on listening.

The sounds that have so far been added to the film, of falling rain, buzz and hoot of motors, roll of thunder, pistol-shots and bombs, are sometimes relatively harmless. And if they were an indication of experiment, suggesting that sound is to be tested and used with discrimination, their presence might cease to be disturbing. But they are being introduced not in any spirit of experiment or with any promise of discrimination. They are there because they are easy to produce. More sound is promised as soon as the technical difficulties shall be overcome. The bombs are fore-runners, evidence of a blind move in a wrong direction, in the direction of the destruction of the essential character of the screen-play.

DOROTHY M. RICHARDSON.

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LÈTTE DE PARIS

LE STUDIO DU VIEUX COLOMBIER

Paris l'été ; le Cinéma du Vieux-Colombier a fermé ses portes au public. Mais le rideau de fer est à moitié levé : de la rue on peut voir un châssis de camion sur lequel un moteur ronfle. A la place de la caissière, un électricien en cote bleue surveille une dynamo. La petite salle, qui a connu tant d'efforts nouveaux, est encore une fois transformée, pendant les vacances : échafaudages qui enjambent les travées, fils électriques, appareil haut perché sur ses longues jambes comme une araignée au milieu de sa toile. C'est le studio créé par M. Jean Tédesco et M. Jean Renoir.

Directeur du Cinéma du Vieux-Colombier, Jean Tédesco est, en France, l'un des hommes qui ont été le plus utile à la cause du cinéma. Grâce à lui nous avons pu voir à Paris des films qui, par leurs qualités exceptionnelles, avaient rebuté les marchands : documentaires, films scientifiques, cinéma pur. Par son effort, par la qualité des programmes qu'il a présentés depuis trois ans, il a conquis au cinéma, il a rendu curieux de l'avenir et des possibilités du cinéma, toute une élite intellectuelle qui avait été amenée à considérer l'écran comme « la plus grande entreprise d'abrutissement public ».

Jean Renoir est un de nos meilleurs, un de nos vrais metteurs en scène. Il a débuté en 1924 par la *Fille de l'eau* et a donné du premier coup les preuves d'une grande sûreté dans la direction du jeu, d'une science, d'une ingéniosité technique remarquables. Ce film caractérisait bien, je crois, l'orientation des recherches de Jean Renoir, qui ne cherche pas à faire du film « d'avant-garde » mais veut faire, pour le public, de bons films dans lesquels il soit possible de mettre en œuvre, en vue d'un effet déterminé, les trouvailles faites au cours des essais, des travaux de laboratoire que le public n'a pas plus à connaître que la recette des plats qu'on lui sert. Les films de Jean Renoir furent ensuite : *Nana* (1925), tiré du roman d'E. Zola, film qui fit la célébrité de Catherine Hessling. (Pourquoi la censure anglaise a-t-elle interdit ce film, que la Film-society va cependant montrer dans une de ses prochaines séances.) Puis *Marquita* (1926).

De plus en plus les metteurs en scène, et Jean Renoir en particulier, se rendent compte qu'il est difficile de faire des œuvres de valeur avec les méthodes de travail actuelles. La faute en est principalement aux studios. Je ne veux pas parler ici de leur équipement, qui cependant laisse souvent à désirer, mais de la façon dont on se sert des studios, de la façon dont les contrats de location sont faits. Les studios coûtent cher. Trop cher pour ce qu'ils sont. Les producteurs préfèrent dépenser leurs capitaux en somptueux décors, en costumes, en reconstitutions ruineuses, plutôt que de louer le studio pour trois semaines de plus. C'est la formule des « super-productions » dans lesquelles deux ou trois clous per-

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mettent une facile publicité, et qui doivent faire avaler au spectateur deux heures d'immonde ennui. C'est en réaction contre cette formule (qui même au point de vue commercial est souvent mauvaise : il n'est pas rare que ces « supers » coûtent plus cher qu'ils ne rapportent) que Jean Tédesco et Jean Renoir ont conçu et réalisé le studio du Vieux-Colombier.

Il n'est ni très vaste, ni très commode, mais du moins il est à eux. En plus d'un grand local vitré, l'ancienne scène du théâtre a été aménagée de façon à ce qu'on puisse tourner pendant la journée, et que le soir, l'écran baissé, la représentation puisse avoir lieu comme auparavant. Ils peuvent y travailler à loisir, loin du bruit, de l'agitation. Ils ont conquis le facteur qui manque presque toujours aux réalisateurs : le temps. Ici pas d'importuns, pas d'indiscrets, pas de figurants désœuvrés qui viennent des plateaux voisins. Deux ou trois machinistes expérimentés, des collaborateurs techniques, et l'opérateur : M. Bachelet. L'équipement du studio a été installé d'après les indications de Jean Renoir, selon les méthodes nouvelles employées en Amérique à l'Eastman Theatre et aux studios de Long Island City. En plus des projecteurs ordinaires, la lumière est fournie par des groupes de lampes à filaments incandescents, survoltées. Elles permettent d'utiliser toutes les radiations vertes, jaunes et rouges auxquelles est sensible la pellicule panchromatique. (C'est le seul studio à Paris ayant ce genre de lampes.) L'usage de la pellicule panchromatique permet aux acteurs de se passer de maquillage.

Jean Renoir a commencé la réalisation du scénario qu'il a

tiré du conte d'Andersen : *La Petite Fille aux Allumettes*. Un des principaux avantages que Jean Renoir a trouvé à ce nouveau studio, c'est la possibilité de ne pas faire à l'avance un découpage strict et immuable. Une très large part est laissée à l'improvisation, à l'inspiration du moment, et chacune des parties peut être tournée dans l'ordre des scènes.

Lorsque *La Petite Fille aux Allumettes* sera terminée, Jean Tédesco et Jean Renoir pensent pouvoir faire des combinaisons avec les jeunes metteurs en scène qui leur inspireront confiance, pour les aider à réaliser des films, qu'ils ne pourraient entreprendre sans cette aide, faute des capitaux nécessaires à la location des grands studios. Ce sera vraiment le laboratoire d'où sortiront les œuvres nouvelles et originales qui forceront à réfléchir les grands producteurs de « films commerciaux ».

MARC ALLÉGRET.

* * *

De Belgique, M. G. Roanne, signale dans « Le Peuple » un film que vient de réaliser un jeune belge M. Ch. Dekeukeleire sous le titre *Combat de Boxe*. C'est un petit poème cinématographique sur la boxe. Le film est bref comme il convient. Il ne dure guère que dix minutes. Deux motifs conducteurs : le poing, la foule... Par images ramassées, sans aucune mise en scène, en aliénant tout ce qui frôlerait l'anecdote, M. De-

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keukeleire a traduit la poésie du ring... Malgré ses imperfections (manque de souplesse dans l'éclairage surtout) son film sorte de « haï-kaï » plein de saveur, est une expérience fort instructive. Dépourvu des moyens matériels les plus élémentaires, son auteur n'en a pas moins appliqué ses théories personnelles sur le découpage, et le rythme qu'il a obtenu émeut, bon gré malgré, le spectateur.

THE MANCHESTER FILM SOCIETY

Last April a dozen of us gathered together and formed the Manchester Film Society. Since then our membership has grown and all our members are people who are seriously interested in the technical and artistic development of the cinema.

Although we appreciate the obvious value of discussions and private shows of little seen films our main object is practical experiment. How many people go to the cinema and, knowing nothing of the difficulties of practical production, come home and pull to pieces or exalt to the skies the films they have seen? We feel that unless amateur film production on a large scale comes to stay the cinema will never get an intelligently critical public.

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At present the cinema suffers from a mass of ill informed destructive criticism from people who either have no knowledge of films at all or a half baked theoretical knowledge gained from text books. One of the main principles of the Manchester Film Society is that "an ounce of practice is worth a pound of theory".

Acting on this our first move was to start work on a short film. Funds would only allow us to make a one reel picture — and a short reel at that. We wanted to tackle something that the commercial cinema has not and would not undertake. At the same time we wanted a subject which would possess some intrinsic merits.

We finally decided to film a local legend. We found that around Manchester there is a mass of folk lore and legend. Its appeal is too limited to make it attractive from a commercial standpoint so that no professional is likely to touch it. When we decided to film Lancashire and Cheshire folk lore we did so because we felt that we were filling a gap in the film world.

Another of our beliefs is that the cameraman and the art director should be one and the same person. It is the work of an artist to compose the picture, to balance the lights and shadows and to design the costumes so that they fit the backgrounds. Surely each frame on the film should be a masterpiece of design in tones of gray and who but one trained to think in lines and masses, one used to converting colour into tones of black and white, trained to see beauty as it will appear when caught by the camera, knows instinctively the angle

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from which the grouping will look best. Who but an artist is qualified to take the picture ?

The technical knowledge required for working the camera and developing the negative can be acquired by study, but an artist is born.

And so it happens that our photographer, Miss Ruth Tonge, is also our Art Director. Her costume designs for this film are reminiscent of the 13th century. They are not however strictly correct as the film is a fairy tale of no set period. The costumes fit in with the backgrounds and the atmosphere of the story and what more could one want. The actual making of the costumes was carried out by members of the Society, in many cases by the players themselves.

Our picture was directed by Peter A. Le Neve Foster, who also wrote the scenario. Here again a point is raised. Should a director write his own continuity or should he take someone else's and produce it as he thinks it ought to be ? In our first film "The Wizard of Alderley Edge" Mr. Le Neve Foster has taken the barest thread of an old legend, woven a tale about it and brought his own thoughts to life in terms of moving pictures.

The scene of our film is Alderley Edge a village 15 miles from Manchester, to which thousands flock every summer from the three counties of Cheshire, Lancashire and Yorkshire. Everyone has heard of the "Wizard" and the Wishing Well, but beyond the fact that Merlin, of the Arthurian legends, is supposed to haunt Alderley Edge (an outcrop of the Pennines) little seems to be known about the "Wizard".

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We built our tale around Merlin who though he was so much feared was at heart a kindly soul.

Of course we met numerous practical difficulties. Our biggest one was that of transporting our company from Manchester to our location 15 miles out of town. All the scenes were taken with natural lighting as there is no studio conveniently near Manchester and even if there had been, there is a great deal to be said in favour of sunlight —provided one can wait for the weather. Then all our members are business people in Manchester and we can only snatch a few precious hours each Saturday afternoon and Sunday in which to take films. This will perhaps explain why it took from May till the middle of August to make a one reel picture.

Our film is now finished. It has its faults and its good points. Considering that only two of our members had any appreciable technical knowledge when we started, that we only spent about £20 and that the summer has been one of the worst on record, it is not surprising that we have made a mess of some of the scenes.

But, whatever, the mistakes we have made in this film, we do ask readers of Close Up to realize that our efforts at film production are sincere. Next year we shall try again backed by the experience gained in this year's work.

COMMENT AND REVIEW

RUSSIA AND HEALTH PROPAGANDA

Some very interesting experimental films of a purely clinical nature have been shown in Russia by the Narkomzdrav (The Peoples' Commissar of Health). All or most of these dealing with very intimate matters are freely shown to the general public, and have been highly successful. Sex instruction is given in complete detail, for the young and for married people. In addition to films explaining birth and the dangers of irregular abortion, the Voronoff and Steinach "Rejuvenation" operation is illustrated, as well as "Conditioned Reflexes" concerning the work of the Pavlov laboratories. In spite of the purely scientific nature of these films one cannot imagine them being shown in England or America even privately, and yet there is no doubt that in this the Narkomzdrav has alighted on an extraordinarily valuable method of hygienic instruction. Statistics show that under the Narkomzdrav the infant mortality rate which was higher in Russia than in any other European country, has diminished from 25 per cent to between 12 and 13 per cent, and that the death rate is now below that of 1913.

* * *

Certainly there are infinite possibilities in connection with health and sex instruction for schools that the film could adequately deal with. *Knowledge is power* we have heard over and over again, and yet the average attitude is to prohibit knowledge concerning the most vital factor in life. It is a pity because so many people grow up abysmally ignorant and make havoc of their lives, and we can no longer deny that hygiene and sex knowledge should be taught thoroughly and as a matter of course with film and text book from earliest infancy. Otherwise health must always remain a matter of hoping for the best, on the dangers of which it is unnecessary to elaborate.

BOYCOTT ON ANTI-GERMAN FILMS

The German Cinema Proprietors' Association has decided to boycott all films produced or distributed in foreign countries in which there is a definite anti-German feeling. This comes into operation immediately, and such films as are already contracted for are to be suspended until satisfactory assurance is obtained that all anti-German films are withdrawn. It is ordered that no films are to be taken from the German-American distributors named "Parafumet" in which are combined Paramount, UFA and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, until such evidence is produced. This is in view of the fact that

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Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer are stated to be showing a rather harmful anti-German film after having given assurance to the contrary. This in conjunction with the decision of Denmark to prohibit War films of every description begins a definite movement toward the passing of the War film from our midst. It does seem rather infelicitous that of the fifty odd films Britain is to make this year, about sixteen are of this order. But let us hope their tendency will be anti-war, in which case they may have some success abroad.

A COMPULSORY FILM IN HUNGARY

In addition to health films in Russia, the Hungarian Ministry of Public Welfare is issuing a film which is to be compulsorily shown in every picture theatre in Hungary. This deals with the problem of tuberculosis, the percentage of which is alarmingly high there, roughly seventy persons dying daily out of a population of some eight to nine millions. A competition was organised, whereby the best possible story could be obtained, and one was chosen with a happy ending encouraging people not to have fear of being treated in hospitals, and not to delay seeking medical aid at once. It is needless to comment on the wisdom of such a move on the part of the Ministry. More and more people are beginning to see the tremendous part films can play in an instructional way. And the making of instructional films dealing with such critical matters compulsory is highly to be commended.

THE WEST INDIES

Americans have bought over entire control of the cinema industry in the West Indies. Formerly this was in the hands of the Colonial Film Exchange, a Trinidad company, with theatres in British Guiana, Barbados and Port-of-Spain, and a monopoly of distribution to all the smaller theatres throughout the islands and colonies. A representative of the Colonial Film Exchange has been in New-York to negotiate the sale, and it is understood that the American syndicate will, in addition to taking over the entire industry as it now is, build large cinema theatres in Bermuda, Demerara, Caracas, etc. It is possible that in Trinidad a quota law will operate in favour of British films, which otherwise will stand little chance of entry. German films, however, through various connections with America are likely to be shown.

INDIA AND GOVERNMENT CONTROL OF CINEMAS

The question of Censorship has arisen anew in India in an official motion which is to be submitted to the Legislative Session at Simla. It is said that this is due to the earnest wishes of the English public. Whatever its cause the fact is that until recently the Government would take no part in any movement for control, saying that it was a subject with which they could not suitably concern themselves. But

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now, while hoping for the best one not altogether unnaturally fears the worst. The chief reasons for complaint seem to be that European civilization does not appear to advantage in films exhibited there. There are two sides to such a statement. While on the one hand European (or pseudo-European via America) civilization very often does not appear to advantage, and might easily do very great harm to European prestige, on the other hand if European civilization is to be presented only in such a way as to impress Indian native populations with the good conduct of Europeans, the only thing that can come of it will be tiresome propagandistic boostings-up of a very debatable regime. The evils either way might easily be avoided if the control were in the hands of cultured and discerning committees made up of statesmen, artists and business men, who could arrive at a satisfactory result through debate. Hasty and intemperate censorship is a great evil, and no censorship at all is infinitely better. Too much care and intelligence cannot possibly be applied in this highly difficult and intricate measure. But censorship will very likely mean, as it so often does, that much that is bad and base and illiterate will remain (let us quote again Nell Gwynn) and much that is true and to the point perish dismally.

If any good is to be done all censorship must be *impartial*, and the censorship department in no way linked up with patriotism or questions of industry. The objection of the natives that the type of film so frequently seen undermines the morals of the race is, as long as India remains under our charge,

a much more important point to be looked into. It is true that this is probably not so, although it is known that many Western every-day customs are libertinism in the eyes of the Indian. The problem of India is not the particular problem of CLOSE UP, but if any harm is done it is probably through the pernicious trade stranglehold of group bookings, that is of forcing exhibitors to take several bad films with each good one. The immediate plan of the Government is to appoint a research committee to investigate conditions and report on the best lines for future development. We would suggest that the committee works not toward constriction of conditions but toward broadening them, so that the somewhat ludicrous situation of certain European customs (such as kissing) being immoral to Indians, and certain Indian customs being immoral to Europeans should gradually break down before a mutual inter-racial recognition with its consequent expansion of outlook.

POINTS FROM LETTERS

America puts us in our place.

Your interesting magazine arrived safely. But oh, the contents somewhat puzzle me. You are all so very full of complaints. I hope you don't mind my bluntness. Perhaps you have cause but over here we see beautiful and wonderful pictures. I can understand the foreign attitude tho

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because America goes ahead —makes mistakes but like the Phoenix, overcomes, and we are so glutted with them that we discount the bad ones. But may I contradict you about Garbo's eyelashes? It comes straight from Hollywood that they are her own. She doesn't have to "sew" them on. When that is done however it is a tiny fringe which is glued on. Her thick eyelashes are her very own from authoritative accounts as also her accent and her throwing down of Jack Gilbert. I have not seen her as yet. And —*really*— we do not eat peanuts in the movies over here. Why all our movie theatres are so gorgeous we couldn't bring ourselves to commit such gaucherie. The industry has made it possible for the smallest towns to have quite elegant houses—beautifully ornamented, maids in the retiring rooms, huge organs and orchestras. "You'd be surprised" (latest slang). Here in Tenafly our theatre has Brussels carpets, artistic lights, an organ on which the player can imitate almost everything, even a conversation between a duck and Felix the Cat for the children. And Don Juan with the Vitaphone playing the Don Juan symphony, timed so that the bells that ring crazily at the Borgia's drunken wedding festivities sound just at the right time with the picture. I saw Pola Negri lately in *Hotel Imperial* solely for the purpose of seeing James Hall of whom I am at present enamoured. It is a shame you cannot see our pictures of Bebe Daniels and Bessie Love and our comedies. About Barrymore in *The Beloved Vagabond*, it was not my idea of him but very good. Resurrection is now playing with Dolores del Rio, a new Mexican beauty who can act too.

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But. . . . I want to give you all the encouragement I can in your venture and that is why I criticise. I must send you a few magazines as the tone of your paper is a *leetle* behind the times in many things. For instance Griffith is not producing much now, and we can see pictures that were shown 10-12-15 years ago because doubtless of the largeness of the U. S. which keeps them in circulation longer. Perhaps I have erred in criticizing your pioneer magazine as I do not know conditions abroad. As time goes on perhaps I shall arrive at the motive. (MRS. VIOLA JORDAN, Tenaflly, N. Y.)

A reply to J. A. Hardy of Folkestone.

Your correspondant states that a form of entertainment which appeals to the taste of the masses can never become an art. If I may say so prejudice alone can have induced such a remark, certainly not logic. Don't the "masses" like cheap paintings, cheap illustrations in magazines and books, cheap music, cheap music hall turns, yet does this in any way mean that there cannot be good paintings, good illustrations, good music, good plays? Just as you would not judge contemporary art by the masses of badly framed lithographs in art dealers' windows, so you do not judge screen art by mass production either. And what (I would like to know) has cost of production got to do with the quality of any work of art, be it in sculpture, painting, poetry or music? The mere fact

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that Rima or Sun Flowers cost little to create has its interest merely on the statistical side and in no way concerns art. Flowers grow for nothing, or they don't. But they are always flowers whether they be wild clover or green orchids. Or sunflowers, unless they are by Van Gogh !

I too read Miss Dorothy Richardson's article on musical accompaniment, and I enjoyed it, but apart from the fact that its value was in that it was a charming and harmonious piece of literature and not a final pronouncement on the necessity for music, it seems to me that the higher the art the more comprehensive it is, I mean that an ultimate art might embrace and unify all arts. Music may not be necessary to films, very often they would be improved without it, but where it *is* right, my own opinion is that music and the film together create an art that is a complete unity, and with tremendous power. The matter of recruiting other arts doesn't matter at all, since all arts are merely different ways of saying the same thing.

The film is *not* merely a mechanical reproduction of the art of design assisted by histrionic ability or backed up by sound. The film is a pure plastic medium capable of expressing any amount of the finest subtleties of form, movement as well as the more psychic processes of thought and mind and states of mind, emotion and psychology. In my opinion CLOSE UP is working on entirely the right lines, and I would like to thank the Editor and all his contributors for their very gallant efforts in a good cause. (MISS MARION FITZ-SIMONDS, LONDON, S. W.)

Film art has steadily declined.

I am glad to think that I am one of the thirty per cent, at any rate, referred to in the Editorial as I am exceedingly interested in cinematography, —much to the scorn of my more highbrow friends, —and its possibilities. I must confess, however, that the art of the cinema [seems to have steadily declined —apart from technique— ever since its birth. Formerly every programme used to contain one educational film, —either a travel film or the manufacture of some such commodity as cotton ; or animal life. And this seems to have been now reduced to a mere Topical Budget. As a matter of fact such films as the Capt. Scott pictures, or the Golden Eagle one, seem to attract crowds and hold them for many weeks, whereas the sensational dramas rarely last for more than a week or two. (MISS GLADYS TODD, FINCHLEY.)

FILMS OF THE MONTH

Chang.

See it a dozen times. *Chang* is the film of the year, of the age. You probably know enough about it to know what it is about. Taken by Ernest B. Shoedsack and Merian C. Cooper, who will be remembered for their previous film *Grass*, it is a record of two years spent in the jungles of Northern Siam. *Chang* has been most successfully moulded into

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story form, and works up to a tremendous climax such as we have never seen before and may not see again. The effect of this is made more magnificent and awe-inspiring by the use of the enlarged screen, which suddenly flashes on three times larger than the normal size, and by the use of Vitaphonic record of animal noises.

Chang opens showing us the home of Kru, a Lao tribesman, built beyond the village alone in a jungle clearing. We are introduced to his wife on a treadle that crushes rice, and to that exquisite, incredible fragment known as "O very small daughter". We meet her brother, we meet Bimbo seated on a fallen tree, an immaculate superhuman ape; a beautiful ghost of an ape, with even lovelier habits. We see the day drawing to its close, we see the animals being shut up for the night, for subtitles have given us only too ample warning of the dangers of the jungle. We see Kru going last of his family and his flocks up the ladder to his home, drawing up the ladder after him, shutting the ladder behind the tall gate that shuts off the home.

Shortly then the jungle wakes, and from this moment until the end action is maintained with breath-taking swiftness. Some of the photographs were astounding, and when one realises the hours or days or weeks of waiting that must have gone to secure some of the close-ups of jungle beasts, and thinks of the thousands of feet of film that must have been sacrificed for the sake of perhaps no more than ten feet, one begins to get a perspective of the wonderful achievement these two intrepid travellers have made.

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The continuity was excellent. There was not a moment that lagged. One was made to be aware of the whole jungle, not of mere episodes from the jungle. This was done most cleverly by parenthetical insertions of different beasts engaged in some different quest. The monkeys always swinging and chattering through tree tops, ever watchful, interested, wary, hanging high over a trap that presently snaps over that lithe and deadly leopard, and the two Malayan sunbears, mother and child are not likely to be forgotten by anyone who has seen them. And that moment when the curtains roll back, and suddenly the whole end of the theatre is one seething mass of stampeding elephants and destruction, is the answer of cinematography to those who profess to despise it.

Frankly the sub-titles, written by Achmed Abdulla, were bad. "Strong is the Jungle" "Ever the Jungle rose in its wrath" were most unworthy, although now and again he hit upon a sharp and poignant phrase. Beyond that the only fault one can find, without being pompous is that it was not longer. Honour to its makers !

Out of the Mist.

Another German achievement. A story of life in a German mountain village, with Mady Christians of *Waltz Dream* fame and Werner Fuetterer whom we have watched improving and advancing for some time. To appreciate it really one

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should have been oneself in German mountain villages, for in every detail it is built up on the subtleties of mountain life, knowing which, one saw the whole time how exactly it was a picture of authentic conditions and local colour and local types. And I wonder how many of those unfamiliar with the peculiar kind of sweetness one meets in rural Germany would have got the sweetness and delicacy of the moment when a butterfly wavering in a baker's kitchen wakes wanderlust in the three strolling musicians (since settled here) who ecstatically watch it ; and the cry going about "It is Spring". We knew too Spring had come to the hills, we knew what it felt like, we had seen, and felt joy just this way with first butterflies and first flowers and wanderlust.

The beginning was in Winter, wind all the time outdoors scouring over the hills, tossing bare branches, shaking the lamp over the inn door where Mady Christians, hair wildly blowing, stands awaiting the return, (Prodigal Son fashion) of the son who has been in 'large cities'. The excitement indoors, the banquet, and the thickening of winter night to thick fog, from which emerge the strolling players, famished and exhausted, among them the fainting, graceful boy who is to start a grim and ruthless situation, was a triumph of direction and photography. The working out of the situation, the combination of gentleness and harshness was a delicately balanced and highly sensitive work of artistic creation. All the types and the 'sets' were right with that rightness of detail which seems to be so inseparably a part of the German mind. The mother, hard, determined, yet swaying beneath constant

blows : "A curse seems to be upon this house," she cries at last, and goes relentlessly on with her relentless planning. Her son, swashbuckling, harsh without his mother's courage or hardness, the Mayor, a plain little good man sweet with love, the servant, the musicians, the father, were exactly what they would somehow be in such a place. And Fuetterer as the boy gave an excellent performance. He was graceful, frail and had beauty, and was refreshingly antidotal to the formularised hero whose qualification seems to be pink cheeks, robustness and some absence of brain.

I do not know whether I quite liked the reconciliation through the Spring flood, but I also did not quite dislike it. However, one can find little to criticise, and the Spring flood, in itself was only too accurate. Most people have had some experience with swollen mountain torrents, and here in Montreux recently we had trees floating down the main streets, and men removing giant boulders from the highways.

Out of the Mist is a Defa production.

The Wizard of Alderly Edge.

On the 15th September the Manchester Film Society held a private show of their first film *The Wizard of Alderly Edge*. With the exception of the dark room work the film has been produced entirely by amateurs. The scenario is based on a local legend —Alderley Edge is a well known Cheshire beauty spot— and the picture is consequently a costume film.

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That amateurs should attempt a period picture is in itself pretty ambitious, apart from the fact that every costume was designed and made by members of the Society as well. As a matter of fact the dressing of the production turned out to be one of the best points about it.

The photography did not set out to establish any new standards. It was intended to be straight, clear camera work and certainly succeeded. The backgrounds were well chosen and the lighting effects, all of which were natural, helped very much in producing the fairy tale atmosphere required by the script.

The acting was excellent, though a little uneven. The make-ups were uniformly good and it is no easy matter for inexperienced artists to put on wigs and crepe hair well enough to deceive the camera.

The whole film has succeeded in capturing the atmosphere of a fairy tale, but it would perhaps have been improved by a greater variation in the distances of the camera from the players. The picture is about 800 feet and was made, including stock costumes and properties, for about £25.

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